

South Dakota State University

Academic Program/Co-Curricular Unit Assessment Plan

Academic Program/Unit Name	Public Relations Undergraduate Major
Department/Office	School of Communication and Journalism
Department Head/Administrator	Dr. Joshua Westwick, director, and Dr. Becky Kuehl, associate director
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SDSU MISSION & VISION STATEMENT (PATHWAY TO PREMIER 2030)

Mission Statement

South Dakota State University offers a rich academic experience in an environment of inclusion and access through inspired, student-centered education, creative activities and research, innovation, and engagement that enhances the quality of life in South Dakota, the region, the nation, and the world.

Vision Statement

South Dakota State University will be a premier land-grant university recognized for high value, innovation, and bold impact.

Core Values

People-Centered: We strive to create a culture where all thrive and are supported on their personal and professional paths toward lifelong learning, growth and opportunity.

Creativity: Creativity is our cornerstone to expand knowledge, develop human understanding, and enrich quality of life. We believe that the best academic programs bring innovative teaching and transformative research together.

Integrity: We act with organizational and personal integrity, through honest interactions, professionalism, transparent and accountable decision-making and respect for others.

Diversity: We are committed to diversity of community and ideas. We believe in a supportive, inclusive, collaborative, and cohesive environment with a focus on access and opportunity for all. We actively seek collaboration, and we respect individuals with differing perspectives, backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Excellence: Excellence is achieved through continuous improvement, assessment, and accountability. We embrace bold action and adapt to an ever-changing world. Individually, we are experts at what we do. Collectively, our impact is even stronger.

Goals

- Achieve excellence through transformative education
- Cultivate and strengthen community engagement
- Foster innovation and increase Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA)
- Be a growing, high-performing and healthy university

PROGRAM/CO-CURRICULAR UNIT MISSION/VISION/GOALS STATEMENTS

Mission Statement

The School of Communication and Journalism fosters the development of exemplary communicators as industry leaders, scholars, professionals, entrepreneurs, and educators through innovative curricula, research, practice, and opportunities.

Vision Statement

To be a leader in the fields represented by the School of Communication and Journalism.

Core Values

People-Centered

- Improve the quality of life and wellbeing of citizens, communities, and tribal nations in South Dakota, the nation, and the world through professional, scholarly, and creative activities, and democratic dialogue.
- Demonstrate empathy for one another.

Creativity

- Encourage success in scholarship, artistic growth, and the desire for lifelong learning and creativity through reflective practice.
- Creatively use tools and technologies appropriate for our fields.

Integrity

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity, as well as the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press.
- Represent oneself honestly through critical, creative, and independent thinking.

Diversity

- Demonstrate respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of communication in a global society.
- Recognize the diversity of all learners.

Excellence

- Embrace and champion endeavors that challenge boundaries, reframe definitions, and push the limits of our academic programs and disciplinary understanding.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the disciplines in which we work.

Public Relations Major Outcomes

This major prepares students with essential written and visual communication, critical thinking, strategy, design, and research skills for careers in public relations and marketing communications.

The following student learning outcomes are designed to meet the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) professional values and competencies expectations for undergraduate public relations programs. The ACEJMC assessment guideline states, “The unit provides a curriculum and instruction, whether on-site or online, that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse domestic and global society.”

The ACEJMC professional values and competencies were updated for FALL 2022. According to ACEJMC, graduates of accredited programs must be aware of and be able to do the following:

SLO 1: Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.

SLO 2: Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

SLO 3: Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.

SLO 4: Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.

SLO 5: Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

SLO 6: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

SLO 7: Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

SLO 8: Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

SLO 9: Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

SLO 10: Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Cross-Cutting Skills for Public Relations Major

Inquiry and Analysis: SLOs 7 and 8

Critical and Creative Thinking: SLOs 4 and 9

Ethical Reasoning: SLO 6

Intercultural Competence: SLOs 2 and 3

Information Literacy: SLOs 5 and 10

Civic Knowledge and Engagement: SLO 1

Curriculum/Experience Map (“Learning Opportunities”)

ACEJMC Competencies and Values	Introduce/Awareness	Reinforce/Understanding	Master/Application
SLO 1. Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.	MCOM 210 Basic Media Writing	PUBR 243 Public Relations Principles	MCOM 430 Media Law
SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.	MCOM 119 First-Year Seminar in Communication and Journalism	PUBR 243	ADV 476 Global and Multicultural Advertising; CMST 470 Intercultural Communication; MCOM 416 Mass Media in Society
SLO 3. Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.	MCOM 210; PUBR 243	PUBR 345 Public Relations Writing	ADV 476; CMST 470; MCOM 416
SLO 4. Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.	MCOM 220 Intro to Digital Media; MCOM 270 Data Analysis in Communication	MCOM 331 Video Production; PUBR 411 Media Analytics	MCOM 494 Internship; PUBR 442 Integrated Marketing Communication & Campaigns
SLO 5. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.	MCOM 210; PUBR 243	PUBR 345; PUBR 411	MCOM 494; PUBR 442
SLO 6. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.	MCOM 210; MCOM 270; PUBR 243	MCOM 430; PUBR 345; PUBR 411	ADV 476; CMST 470; MCOM 416; PUBR 442
SLO 7. Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods	MCOM 210; MCOM 270; PUBR 243	PUBR 345; PUBR 411	MCOM 494; PUBR 442

appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.			
SLO 8. Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.	MCOM 270	PUBR 411	PUBR 442
SLO 9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.	MCOM 210; MCOM 220; PUBR 243	PUBR 345; PUBR 411	MCOM 494; PUBR 442
SLO 10. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.	MCOM 220; MCOM 270	MCOM 331; PUBR 411	MCOM 494; PUBR 442

Assessment Methods Description

Three methods of assessment will be used to measure the ten student learning outcomes:

Assessment Method #1: Professional Panel Assessment Overall Average

Industry professionals will review capstone projects completed in PUBR 442 IMC Campaigns over two academic years. This course reflects student learning throughout the program. Evaluators will assess all 10 SLOs.

Type of Assessment: Direct measure.

Timeline: Every two years; Summer of 2024, 2026, 2028, etc.

Oversight: Associate Director and Capstone Instructor

Benchmarks: 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale.

Frequency: Every other summer.

Use of Information: The direct measure is designed to ensure that the program is meeting the values and competencies required for ACEJMC program accreditation. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

Assessment Method #2: Internship Assessment

Internships are required of all majors. Students can complete one or two internships for credit. Every internship is approved by the school's internship coordinator to ensure the experience is applicable to the field of study and meets our internship requirements for credit. If an internship occurs before the sophomore year or students complete an internship outside of their major, students enroll in MCOM 394 for one credit. If an internship occurs during the junior or senior year, students enroll in MCOM 494 for 2-3 credits. Only students enrolled in MCOM 494 participating in an internship in their major area of study will be assessed. Only the five SLOs that are mapped to MCOM 494 are assessed in the surveys. This assessment allows for measurement of progress toward achieving student learning outcomes. The student's work is assessed by their supervisor at the conclusion of the internship. Students also assess their experience at the conclusion of their internship. This assessment allows for measurement of progress toward achieving student learning.

Type of Assessment: Direct measure (supervisor survey); Indirect measure (student survey).

Timeline: Every academic year (Fall-Summer).

Oversight: Associate Director and Internship Coordinator.

Benchmarks: MCOM 494: 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale.

Frequency: Yearly

Use of Information: The direct and indirect measures are designed to determine if the skills taught in the degree program meet the needs and standards current within the industry and ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

Assessment Method #3: Senior Exit Survey

Students will complete the exit survey at the end the semester they are graduating to assess their own understanding of the ACEJMC student learning outcomes. All ten SLOs are assessed in the survey.

Type of Assessment: Indirect measure.

Timeline: Conducted every semester; analyzed yearly during the spring.

Oversight: Associate Director and Major Assessment Coordinator.

Benchmarks: 4.0 on a 5.0-point scale.

Frequency: Yearly.

Use of Information: This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

Communication Plan

Yearly assessment results will be shared with the School of Communication and Journalism faculty and staff members at an established School monthly meeting and also with the School of Communication and Journalism Advisory Board Members at their annual meeting. Assessment findings will be translated and appropriate information will be shared through university outlets.

References

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (2022). ACEJMC Accrediting Standards. Retrieved from <http://acejmc.ku.edu/PROGRAM/STANDARDS.SHTML#std2>